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ABSTRACT

Psychological abuse, defined as behavior that is sufficiently threatening to limit the capacity to work, family and social interactions, and the enjoyment of good physical or mental health can be as damaging to women as physical abuse. To learn more about this behavior a series of open ended interviews was conducted with 25 women who identified themselves as victims of psychological abuse. Common areas dicussed in all the interviews were child care, sexual compatibility, socializing, and financial responsibility. Using an inductive analysis method and a coding system for information retrieval from the data generated, 21 areas of psychological abuse with sub-areas were identified, e.g., silent treatment (refusal to discuss or to talk at all), sleep deprivation, isolation, erratic behavior, and suicide threats. Several of the women reported symptoms of physical distress and several reported suffering the pain and discomfort of feelings of unreality and non-existence. Women who were out of the abusive situation at the time of the interviews reported that their lives had changed for the better, that they were healthier and more confident, but that they were more self-protective, avoided men, and believed that they deserved better than they had received in life. (The coding forms with the numbers reported in each category and the emotional-state forms are appended.) (JAC)

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE OF WOMEN BY SPOUSES OR LIVE-IN LOVERS: WHAT FORM CAN IT TAKE?

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Psychological Association, April 29, 1982.

"Psychological Abuse of Women by Spouses or Live-In Lovers: What Form Can It Take?"

By Pat Hoffman, Saint Cloud University Counseling Center

Presented at the
Minnesota Psychological Association Annual Meeting
April 29, 1982

Background

During the past ten years I have been following the literature on physical abuse with great interest. During that same period of time, in my job at the St. Cloud University Counseling Center, in assertiveness training groups and in ordinary social interaction I have heard accounts of behavior that seemed potentially as damaging as any physical abuse but had in its components either little or none, over-all, of the physical abuse element.

I was convinced that I had been seeing and hearing of cases of psychological abuse. To learn more about this behavior I decided to conduct open-ended interviews with women who identified themselves as victims of psychological abuse by husbands or live-in lovers. I obtained my interviewees through word of mouth, notices in the area shelter for battered women, Woman House, The Area Women's Center, the St. Cloud State University Couseling Center and the local newspaper's classified section.

Mental abuse, in the days before no-fault divorce, was frequently cited as a reason for the break-up of a marriage. There has always been a vagueness of definition in the term, however. For the purpose of this study, the definition of psychological abuse was "behavior that was sufficiently threatening to the woman that she believed that her

capacity to work, interact in the family or society, or to enjoy good physical or mental health, had been or might have been threatened." The terms psychological abuse, psychological battering and mental abuse were used interchangeably.

Method

Twenty-five women were used for the study. Confidentiality was assured. Open-ended tape recorded interviews were chosen as the means of obtaining the information. The women were asked to tell what was said and what was done that they believed constituted psychological abuse or battering. Four common areas were covered with all of the women. These were the areas of child care, if applicable, sexual compatibility, socializing and financial responsibility. These were areas that were usually covered by the women without prompting but if they did not mention them, questions were asked.

The inductive analysis method was used, letting the material come from the interview. I worked with a consultant in devising a coding system for information retrieval from the data generated by the lengthy interviews. For my presentation today, the areas of abuse identified by the women, and the numbers of women reporting each category of abuse will be listed. Twenty-one areas of abuse with sub-areas were identified. These categories were generated by the data. The general categories were broken down in order to differentiate as completely as possible the various types of abuse. The hand-outs that you have list the categories of abuse and the number of women who believed that they had been victims of that particular type of abuse.

When the coding of the tape-recorded interviews was completed, the following results, listed in the same order in which they appear in the coding sheets, were found.

1. Silent Treatment - Two sub-categories were identified here.

a. Refusal to discuss. Twenty-two women mentioned this as a method of psychological abuse. Examples in this category varied greatly from "G's" husband who would discuss selected topics, but would refuse to discuss any situation where he appeared in a bad or unflattering position to the husband of "C" who would appear oblivious to what she was saying, often wander out of the room and eventually come back as if there had been no previous conversation. Several of the men were aggressive regarding attempted discussions and would respond by making pronouncements about whatever subject the woman was attempting to discuss, then state that was the end of it, that it was not to be mentioned again. "A" stated that her husband talked more intimately to strangers than he did to her.

The wives that stated abuse in this area reported that when they attempted to discuss decisions or happenings with their spouses they were accused of nagging or attempting to manipulate. A common statement by the men involved was "There is nothing to discuss, if there is a problem, it is your problem." One man was very open in stating that he did not wish to discuss feelings.

b. Refusal to talk at all. Fourteen of the women responded that this was an area of abuse they had experienced. "E's" husband refused to talk to her at all for thirty days. During this time he also refused

to eat any of the meals that she cooked, but cooked for himself or ate in restaurants. Some time later he stated that he had givern her the silent treatment because she had enrolled in school, thus in his opinion, trying to be better than he.

The husband of "Z" would go for weeks at a time without saying a word when there were alone together. These periods of silence were usually preceded by false accusations or simply a statement indicated that "she knew what she had done." "B" stated that although she tried to change, to avoid problems and to pacify, nothing she tried seemed to prevent her husband from becoming angry and going for days without speaking. For all of the men who showed this behavior, the period of silence ended abruptly and they acted as if nothing unusual had occured.

2. Sexual - Five sub-categories are described.

a. Accusations of promiscuity. Thirteen women reported that they had been accused of sexual promiscuity. In no case was there basis for these accusations at the time they were made, nor had there been a history of sexual promiscuity. One woman was accused of having sex while at a union meeting although her spouse knew the timelines for the meeting and, practically, there would have been no opportunity for dalliance. It would have been easy for him to have checked on her attendance at the meeting. Another interviewee was wakened and struck for having sexual activity. This was based on the evidence that she had forgotten to close the garage door, therefore, she must have been entertaining a man. "E's" husband has often accused her of having sexual relations with men in their 80's and 90's. These men were residents of a nursing

home where she worked and were the only men with whom he permitted her to interact. "J's" husband sent her grocery shopping with their five children, but still accused her of infidelity on these trips.

b. Lack of sexual activity with interviewee. Only nine of the women mentioned this as an area of abuse. The lack of sexual activity was not a concern immediately after marriage in most of these cases but the sexual activity declined as to number of interactions as well as to the quality of activity. Eventually most of the women grew to hate sexual activity with their men.

c. Disparaging regarding her ability or attractiveness. Although some husbands called their women cold, prudish, fat, etc. only nine women listed this as an area of abuse. Most of the nine women who felt battered in this area were reacting to infidelity, often very blatant, and therefore to her implied lack of ability or attractiveness, rather than to actual remarks. An extreme case was the husband of "W" who insisted on bringing his girl friend to dinner at their home. The women in this study had been raised to believe that if they were willing lovers and didn't refuse sex with their husbands, infidelity would not occur. The husbands guilty of this particular form of abuse had a history of affairs.

d. Little or no tenderness. Fifteen women mentioned the lack of tenderness on the part of their husband or lover. An interesting sidelight was that these same women stated that before marriage the men had been extremely tender, seductive and communicative but had changed in all of these areas, noticeably, immediately after marriage. The men often made crude remarks about the sexual act, such as "needing to get

it off". The women reporting abuse in this area stated that the sexual act was quick, for the man's benefit only and that they felt raped and therefore grew to hate the sexual interaction. The husband of "G" was unable or unwilling to say "I love" or "I am proud of you". Accomplishments of the man seemed to be all that mattered and he would not even attempt to show or to learn how to show tenderness. "C" had one orgasm during her marriage. Her husband laughed uproarously and said it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. She was extremely reluctant to have sexual relations after this incident.

One man looked at pornographic magazines while performing sexually with his wife. Another man rented pornographic movies and watched those until he was aroused, then demanded that his wife have intercourse with him. One of the men whose wife was in the study was unable to show affection unless he was drinking heavily.

Contrary to findings of some studies regarding the sex life of men who physically abused, these men were not overtly abusive sexually. The one exception was the husband of "G" who wanted a sexual partner who was different and caused her great pain by putting rubber bands tightly around her breasts as well as forcibly having anal intercourse with her. This type of behavior caused her to suffer excruciating pain for days afterwards. She stated that her husband was aware of her pain and that each time he began this type of sexual assault she begged him not to do it.

c. <u>Encouraged promiscuity</u>. One woman in the sample experienced this type of abuse, apparently for no reason except to assuage the husband's own guilt feelings. In this case the husband had affairs

throughout their marriage and encouraged her to do so also. He did not encourage any type of group sex, threesomes or foursomes. This "encouragement" became insistent and was harmful to the woman's self-image, according to her statements. This woman theorized that although her husband had not been particularly young when they married, he had never during that relationship accepted the married role. She said that he now appeared to be doing so with his new lover.

"C's" lover attempted to force her into prostitution but he considered this strictly a business proposition. He would have resorted to violent measures to prevent her interaction with another man in other circumstances. This venture was not agreed to by "C", but the fact that it was suggested pained her greatly and forced her to evaluate herself somewhat in the terms that he had thought of her.

3. Denial - Two areas of denial are explored.

a. Denial of her perceptions. This is an area in which a high percentage of the sample identified abuse. Nineteen out of the sample stated that there was an almost complete denial of her perceptions, regardless of confirming factual evidence, when her perceptions differed from the man's. Much verbal abuse was unleashed in this area. The women were told that they were insane, that events simply had not happened as they recalled, they were ridiculed, they were accused of being intoxicated and of being too stupid to perceive accurately. "V" stated that she and her spouse had what she described as a "gamey" relationship and that they did not live reality until their marriage ended.

b. Denial of happenings. A smaller number of women, ten, encountered the denial of happenings in their abusive situation. When this denial was present it usually had to do with the denial of some abusive event. Some of the men claimed to have been the victims of black-outs and thus could not remember the specific incident, but denied that they would have committed the act. Others simply said that the event had not taken place, not that the woman had perceived it or misinterpretated it wrongly, simply that it had not happened. Some of these women believed that their men were lying while others blamed the denial on mental problems or alcohol.

4. Overt anger behavior - Five areas of this behavior was described.

a. Tantrums. Under this category falls sudden fits of temper that resulted in the male leaving the house, slamming doors, reckless driving, swearing, etc. This is a category of abuse that eighteen of the women experienced. "A's" husband ripped his clothes off, scattering buttons and tearing seams, took her car keys away to immobilize her and later disconnected the wires on her automobile. One of the husband's locked his wife out of the house in the middle of the winter.

b. Verbal threats. Verbal threats experienced by the women included serious threats involving the threat to kill or harm the woman or someone dear to her. Often the threats were quite specific as to how and when the aggression would be committed. Verbal threats also included the threat to take custody of the children away from the woman should she attempt to leave or obtain outside intervention in the marriage. One husband threatened to ram his car into the house because he was audited

by the Internal Revenue Service. Another man called his wife's father, who had a heart condition, and told him that he was beating the hell out of the woman. "T's" husband told her that if she left him he would put a contract out on her. Eleven women experienced this type of abuse.

c. Very irritable. Some of the husbands in the sample spent most of their lives being extremely irritable, according to nineteen of the women. These men resented anything which interferred with whatever they were doing, whether this was sleeping, watching television or planning a fishing trip. Examples given to me in the interviews indicated that there was extreme resentment when anyone had expectations of the male. One woman said that she could tell when her partner, who had a drinking problem, was going to begin to drink. He would behave very pleasantly, then become very irritable, next begin to drink. Then the cycle would begin again.

d. Damaging housewares. This was not an isolated occurance by the men who psychologically abused in this way. This was a typical reaction to anger of ten men. Often the woman had no idea what had triggered the anger. There might be no discernable build-up of tension and then a sudden explosion. In the case of "C", losing in a bridge game could mean that a hole would be kicked through a wall or that floor lamps would be broken. Another woman, arriving home 15 minutes later than planned with out of town visitors, was told to get in the house and clean it up. Everything breakable had been broken. Ashtrays were dumped, the telephone was pulled from the wall and clothes were pulled out of drawers and closets and strewn throughout the house.

The women who reported this abuse all had similar stories to tell.

Their homes were filled with broken, mismatched items, and their woodwork and doors were scarred and broken.

e. Damaging interviewee's personal belongings. This was done by the male partner of eleven of the women. These men demonstrated a special interest in destroying or damaging personal belongings of their women. Prime targets for this type of attack were the woman's clothing, automobile or personal items that she had brought to the relationship from her own home. In one case sugar was put in the gas tank of a new automobile the woman had finally earned enough money to buy. This act was done by her lover. Two of the women reported that their telephones had been pulled out of order at least four times in a year.

f. Hitting, etc. The men discussed in these interviews were not primarily physical abusers, however, twelve of them, on at least one occasion have hit their woman. The woman's insistence that this would not be tolerated again or the intervention of someone else, ended the physical violence at the time of the interview, even though seven of them are still living with their abuser.

"G" had been hit in the head and on the legs with a board almost two inches thick at one time during the relationship with her lover. This same man had fired a gun at her. Slapping and hair pulling was a favorite method of attack for the violence prone men in the study. In one case, a male who had not been violent started towards his wife and child with threatening gestures. They were afraid and ran, with the male following closely behind. When he saw that they were heading towards a neighbor's yard and that the neighbor was in the yard, he stopped immediately and sauntered away as if nothing were occuring. This illustrated to the

woman that he was capable of exercising control of his temper and his actions if he chose to do so.

Most of the women stated that they feared the men, even when violence had not been a part of the relationship. "H's" husband played with guns when he was angry. He was a sharpshooter so his ability to use the guns had been proven. He never pointed one of them at her, but placed them on a table or on the floor during times of anger.

5. Slave-master or Person-thing Relationship - Four areas of this type of behavior are described.

a. Issuing orders. Over half of the women in the sample, fifteen, were ordered, with regularity, to carry out tasks, to shut up, to go home, to change clothes, whatever the man wanted at that moment. There was no consideration as to whether or not this was something that the woman wanted to do at that time, or indeed at any time. The women interpreted these commands as being an indication of power on the part of the male and powerlessness on their own part. Most of the women obeyed the orders, hoping that would avoid angry scenes.

b. Disregard for desires or feelings. The twenty-three women who reported this disregard were women who had told the men in their lives how they felt about the instances reported. The practices they had begged their husbands or lovers to cease were continued or accelerated. Some typical examples are, staying out all night or very late without notification that this would occur, public humiliation of various sorts, infidelity, quitting jobs and frequent moves.

"T" was attending school when she married. Her new husband quit

his job and took one in another town, thus forcing her to give up her training. When she again enrolled in school in the new area, he forced her to hitchhike several miles to attend classes. Several of the husbands discussed intimate details regarding their sexual exploits with girl friends. One man, whose wife's career was in a helping field, told her that she was sick to want to be in "shit".

c. Refusal to use person's name. Only one woman had an extreme example of this. Her husband refused to call her by her given name and had not since early in their marriage. He would refer to her when speaking to others as "my wife", "your mother", and to her personally as "you", "lard ass" or other insulting names. She stated that this made her feel like a nonenity and either very unimportant in his life or the object of hostility. She felt that she had no identity. Other women spoke of being referred to as "the old woman", "bitch", etc. but they were called by their own names most of the time.

d. Made major life decisions without consulting with the woman. This was a common area of abuse, with twelve of the women in the sample reporting numerous examples. Some of the examples were quitting a job or accepting a position and planning to move without discussion, retiring and buying a house far away from the area where the couple was living, again without any discussion and the decision to have a vasectomy without consulting the woman. The lover of one of the women married another woman one day after moving out of her apartment. Another man moved the couple's mobile home and all of their belongings to a different town. When the woman arrived home from work, the home was gone.

6. Possessiveness - Five areas of this type of abuse are explored.

a. Jealousy to point of awakening at all hours to check, following, etc. This was a major factor in only nine of the cases of abuse. The women who were the object of this jealousy were forced to account for their every minute and all movements. They had very little time free from work at home and work at a job, so it seems remarkable that these victims were singled out.

"C" reported that during the early years of marriage when her husband called her on the telephone at all hours of the night and early morning she assumed that he missed her or was bored and wanted someone to talk to. Later she suspected that he was checking up on her. Regardless of the reason she was able to get very little sleep. Women who were victims of extreme jealousy reported overwhelming feelings of harassment and inhibition. One husband has telephoned frequently during the day during a long-lasting marriage, even though he knows that she detests talking on the telephone.

b. Refusal to have children or to share person with children reluctantly. Only three of the sample reported this abuse. Several women related that their spouses "gave in" to their desire for children when the women showed signs of discontent with the relationship.

c. Reluctance or refusal to take her out with friends. This was reported as an area of abuse by ten of the women. Several of the husbands told the women that they were too ugly or dumb to go out with them and their friends. Before marriage or the live-in relationship the social scene was an active one, however. When, as in this area of of the country, such occasions as wedding dances, etc. were obligatory,

the husbands would dance with other women but not with their wives, thus furthering the idea in the mind of the woman that he was ashamed of her and was avoiding being identified with her. If the couple went out at all, it was with his friends.

d. Reluctance to permit her interaction with her friends. As is true with physical abusers, these men, in fifteen of the cases made an issue of discouraging their women's friendships with either men or women. Most of the men made statements that indicated a complete lack of understanding of close friendship between women and six of them told their wives that the only reason women would want to be their friends would be because the woman or women in question were lesbian. These same men also expressed great hostility towards homosexuality. With other men in the sample, the desire to break off friendships between their women and female friends is unclear in purpose, however, these same men attempted to alienate the woman from her family. The desire to have her time and energies completely concentrated upon him, appears to have been present. One husband accused his wife of disloyalty because she wanted to see her parents occasionally. He refused to let her invite them for Christmas and when she did so, he stayed away over the holiday.

e. Demanding return from social gathering where she has gone without him. Only one woman reported this as a problem, however, several of the women stated that they were not permitted to go anywhere without the man and indeed, seldom with him. With this pattern of being forced to remain at home, the occasion for ordering the woman to return would not arise.

7. Disparaging Treatment in Front of Acquaintances - Two types of this abuse are described.

a. Verbal. Nineteen of the women reported this as an area of psychological battering. The methods used by the men differed greatly. Some of the men were quite open about the verbal abuse, calling the women "bitch", "cunt" and "whore". Other men talked as if their wives were stupid and indeed called them "dumb", "stupid" and "pea brain" in front of others. Some of the more subtle abuse included telling of the wife's "stupidities", disputing her statements and implying that she was agitated and not rational. When the extreme verbal abuse occurred it was usually during a fit of anger and often the man would be exceedingly attentive and affectionate acting in front of others in the ordinary course of events.

b. Physical. All of the ten cases of physical abuse reported in this sample were more subtle when they occurred in public, than when they occurred in the home. The acts consisted of slapping, pulling the person by the hair, shaking, etc. The men used drinking as an excuse for perpetrating the physical abuse.

8. Unreliability Regarding Commitments - This area of abuse is divided into two sub-categories.

a. Broke them. The subjects reported in thirteen of the cases, that the men regularly broke commitments. The commitments varied from plans to be home for dinner at a certain time, promises for family outings, paying off indebtedness, to ceasing to drink. The women who were victims of this type of abuse stated that they never knew whether

or not obligations would be met, but after a number of embarrassing or disappointing incidents, assumed that they would not be. There was a lack of logic in several of these cases, "H" for instance was told that a loan her parents had made to them had been paid off. There was virtually no chance that this breaking of a commitment would not become known to the woman.

b. Stretched time limits to extremes. Most of the ten cases of stated abuse in this area centered on social occasions. In a typical situation, the man would start drinking with friends, and would return home hours later for dinner, to take his wife to work or to whatever other commitments he had made. The men who had this disregard for time commitments also were completely unwilling to make a telephone call to their home to report a change of plans. In one case, the woman, knowing that her husband had been despondent, called the sheriff's office when he had not returned by early morning. This angered and embarrassed the man but did not convince him to let her know, in the future, of a change in his plans. All of these ten women reported lying awake at night worrying about a possible accident that the husband might have been involved in.

9. Refusal to Take Responsibility for Upkeep of Home, Year, etc. - This abuse is sub-categorized into three areas.

a. Took none. Fourteen of the women stated that their men took absolutely no responsibility for the upkeep of the home, yard or appliances. In only one of these cases did the wife feel that she could hire everything done. The other women painted inside and out, shingled houses.

repaired automobiles and appliances, replaced doors, gardened, mowed and in one case, built a house. In most of these cases the woman was also either holding down a full time job, caring for children, or both. In these cases the men noticed that repairs were needed, criticized the way in which the work was done, but did not see the work as their own responsibility.

b. Took little responsibility. In the eight cases where the men took little responsibility they might plan the work, oversee parts of it or take on one portion as their own. The main responsibility rested with the woman. In the case of one farm couple, the man milked the cows, but the woman who had a full-time job, cared for the children and the house and yard was required to stand and watch him milk.

c. Completely ignored it. In these cases the man did not seem to be aware of the physical surroundings or the need to keep up those surroundings. Seven of the women reported that they lived with this attitude.

10. Refusal to Accept Responsibility for Marriage Relationship - This is broken down into three areas of abuse.

a. Refusal to seek professional help for problems. A number of the fourteen cases who were reported as experiencing this category, eventually did seek professional help for drinking problems but not only did they not seek help for marriage problems, they denied that there were problems. The men insisted that the women had problems and were therefore the ones who should seek professional help. Several of the men offered to have counseling when the woman was in the process of obtaining a

divorce. Four women mentioned their resentment that they were going to Alanon because of the male's drinking problem, while the men were not attending any group. One man is quite insistent that his wife should go through treatment for alcoholism, as he did, although she has no drinking problem.

b. Refusal to acknowledge any responsibility for problems. A major problem in working through the relationship difficulties appears to be the male's reluctance to accept any responsibility for the problems. The perceptions of the events differed between the man and the woman to the extent that the woman reported they did not appear to be referring to the same event. The male accepted responsibility only for drinking and even then the woman was told that she was the reason for it. She was told that she had nagged, had made him wait, had caused it in some way. Eighteen women reported this abuse.

c. Refusal to give time line for return from outing or work. The eight women who reported this form of abuse found that no logic could convince their men to become cooperative in this matter. Each woman insisted that she had told the man over and over how she worried or how she was inconvenienced and even though she attempted to reassure him that she was not trying to restrict, but simply to establish communication in the area, the man would refuse to change his habits. These same men became violently angry when the wife was even a few minutes late, and no excuse was adequate to prevent a tantrum.

11. Vile Language Directed Toward the Woman - Two sub-categories are described.

a. Language directed to her in private. Vile language was coded to mean obscene expressions, not simply uncomplimentary ones. All of the women in the sample had abusive language directed to them, fifteen had vile language. There is a diversity of income and education on the part of the husbands reported in this study but there is no diversity whatsoever in the vile language they used. All had about a five word vocabulary and appeared in agreement on what one calls one's wife or lover when angry or wishing to insult her. All names have to do with her sex or her sexual function.

b. Language directed to her in front of others. Some of the men who were extremely abusive to their women in private would never reveal this side of their vocabulary in public. Twelve of the men, did not let the presence of others affect their language.

12. Sleep Deprivation - Three sub-areas are described.

a. Due to worry and concern. This was a major area of abuse for twenty-one of the women in the sample. Even though these women expressed the need to have some sort of timeline for arrivals at home for meals or to sleep, the men consistently resisted this. The women whose husbands stormed out of the house during a tantrum had adequate reason to fear that the men might take some action that would result in their physical harm. Several of the men regularly threatened or intimated that they were considering suicide. It was therefore logical to fear that this was the time the threat had been carried out when the men did not return home when expected,

The men who misused their income and created involved financial difficulties caused worry and concern on the part of their wives that

interfered with sleep. And indeed, simply attempting to make a decision as to the future course of the relationship caused sleeplessness on the part of the women.

b. Due to interuptions by partner. Six of the men would waken the women when they themselves were agitated and unable to sleep. On these occasions the women would be harangued about part grievances, real or imagined. All of the women reporting this type of abuse stated that an event that was important in her work, the start of a new quarter of classes, a speech that she was to give, a crucial meeting were almost certain to trigger a tantrum that would result in her getting almost no sleep and going into the challenging event in poor mental and physical condition.

One of the women reporting abuse in this area was awakened regularly and repeatedly by her husband while he was at work and she was attempting to sleep so that she could work during the day. When he was not working at night, he would sleep during the evening, then demand that she go out with him or have sex with him. During this time also she was working during the day. This victim still has difficulty sleeping through the night even though she has been out of the marriage for five years.

c. Due to scenes. Bedtime for these victims was a time for recriminations and for scenes. Often the men were able to seemingly shrug off the events and sleep but nine of the women reported they were unable to sleep a necessary amount of time.

13. Isolation - Three sub-categories are described.

a. Moved far away from her support system. In nineteen of the cases

the woman was moved away from her support system, in one case to another country. In two of the casee the move was not immediately after the marriage, however when the move occurred, the abuse began. The abuse was particularly difficult for the women because they were without close friends or family to confide in or to discuss the situation. They were not encouraged to make new friends and in fact were often prevented from doing so.

Even in cases where the woman's family and friends were geographically near, she was prevented or discouraged from interacting with them. Two of the men were jealous when their wives took the man's mother on a shopping tri[illegible].

b. Physical without phone and/or automobile. These psychologically abused women were not as physically isolated as physically abused ones often are. In most of these cases, an automobile was necessary because the woman was working out of the home. This outside work also gave her an opportunity to meet with other persons and interact with them on a limited basis. Seven women from the sample complained of physical isolation during part of their relationship.

c. Some distance away from neighbors. Only two of the women lived physically isolated by distance from her neighbors.

14. Negative Attitude Towards Women - Two sub-categories are described.

a. Expressed hatred or disgust with women. This was not an issue verbalized by most of the spouses in this study. Only five men voiced this emotion. There were subtle manifestations of the attitude as in the case of "Z's" husband who wished her to perform oral sex on him.

He refused to reciprocate saying that would be disgusting.

b. Expressed hatred or disgust with mother. This was an expressed emotion by eight men whose wives were interviewed. The women did report that a number of the men did not treat their mothers well, however others of the men were extremely close to their mothers.

15. Misuse of Recreational Activity to Point of Addiction - Four categories are described.

a. Television. This was an area of abuse in only two cases, however, for the men involved the misuse was extreme. Both men would look at anything that appeared on the screen, including the test pattern. One of the men not only watched television by the hour but masturbated while watching it whether the program was educational television or the test pattern. As a result of seeing this misuse of television, neither of the women involved in the situation wants to watch television at all.

b. Drinking. Drinking enters into the account of many of the women. Fifteen reported this as an area of great misuse. One woman reported that her husband displayed a Dr. Jekyll - Mr. Hyde personality when drinking to excess. Another man spent $200 a week on liquor and buying drinks for acquaintances at local bars. The result in this instance was that his wife had to work two jobs in order to make the house payment and support the family. In a number of cases drinking to excess was used as an excuse for the men abusing. However, several of the psychological abusers were recovered alcoholics or had never had a drinking problem and they displayed much of the same abusive behavior as did the men who drank.

c. Drugs. The husbands or lovers of these women were not drug users except in three cases. In two of these cases the drugs used were prescription drugs which were misused.

d. Other. More men in this group misused sports than any other miscellaneous activity. Twelve of the men had this over-emphasis on sports and used almost any type of sporting activity, active participation or spectatorship. One man masturbated many times each day and was doing this at inappropriate times and places so I chose to classify him in this category also.

16. Frequent and Severe Criticism of Women - Five variations of this abuse are described.

a. Of strong points or points of at least moderate strength. One of the surprising findings of this study is that eighteen of the women reported that an aspect of their personality or activities criticized strongly was an area in which they considered themselves proficient. While the women were in the abusive situation or until they had a support system, this criticism of an area that had been looked upon as a strong one, served to demoralize and cause great self-doubt. Almost all of these women were told that they were ugly, that they were stupid and that their cooking, housekeeping, childrearing talents, etc. were very poor. They were told that they kept their houses like pig pens even though they scrubbed, waxed, washed and repaired constantly. All of the women that reported criticism in this area were attractive, verbal and had demonstrated through achievement in school or jobs that they were intelligent. Three were criticized for being fat but were in fact slim,

Laziness was another fault attributed to them but a list of their activities would immediately dispel any veracity to the claim. "O's" husband told her that she had no friends, when in fact she had always been sought after as a friend.

b. Criticism of weaknesses or general criticism. Ten of the men criticized the women in a general way, no doubt finding areas of weakness that did exist. One woman was criticized for being indecisive. She does not appear that way now but at the time of her relationship, she may have been indecisive. It is possible that in her attempt to avoid scenes and criticism, she may indeed have deviated from one course of action to another. One of the women interviewed stated that she tried so many strategies to avoid abuse that she eventually did not know what she wanted to do. She stated that even years after the relationship ended she was not yet sure what desires were hers and what were habits or reactions to suggestions by others. Some of the men appeared to communicate only through criticism. One woman confessed that her greatest weakness was expecting others to work as hard as she did but her husband criticized her for laziness.

c. Criticism of intelligence. Twelve of the women mentioned this as an area of abuse. In the cases where the woman was accused of not being intelligent she had more education than her partner. There were women in the study who mentioned their own education in a disparaging way in connection with their highly educated partners. These women were not specifically told that they were less intelligent but it appears that some interaction was taking place between the two persons or in the society in which they moved that was giving covert messages to the woman, if not

about her intelligence, then about the use she was making of it.

d. Criticism of physical appearance. Twelve of the women were harassed regarding their physical appearance. At the time of the interviews, these women were a very attractive group of people. The criticism of physical appearance seemed to center around the issue of social interaction. As previously described typical incidents were the refusal to accept the women's appearance in various outfits until it was either too late to go out or she had no desire to go. Other men were quite crude about their criticism. They simply said "You are too ugly to go out with me. I don't want to be seen with you". Several of the women were criticized for being fat (one was pregnant) but in fact, the women criticized for this were not overweight. Specific parts of their bodies were pointed out as not attractive enough. They were told that their legs were too large, sausage shaped, their breasts were too small, or it seemed, whatever struck the fancy of their abuser to criticize at that moment.

e. Criticism of sexual attractiveness. Only six women reported this type of abuse although others stated that it was implied when their husbands were unfaithful or were overly attentive and observant about the sexuality of other women. One woman was forced to regularly accompany her husband to shopping malls and parks where he would comment on the women passing by and ask her to describe their physical characteristics to him. This same man would masturbate while looking at porno magazines and would also use these pictures to arouse himself for sex with her. The woman stated that this felt like rape.

"G's" husband was quite involved with porno movies which he would rent for use at home. In both of these cases the women felt that they were inadequate physically even though their partners did not verbally say that they were. The picture that some of the women received from their men was a confusing one. "Z's" husband left her for a younger woman but later wanted to resume sexual relations with her because the new woman was inept.

17. Ability to Assist with Children (Their Own) - Three categories are described.

a. Non-acceptance of duties. Ten of these men showed no acceptance of any responsibility for assisting with the children. It was not that they believed that they should assist and did not, they appeared to consider it to be no part of their responsibilities.

b. Mistreatment. Physical mistreatment was only a problem with six of the women. This was not the severe mistreatment that we find with physical abusers. The mistreatment in these cases consisted of slaps, overly hard spankings of the children and a great deal of yelling. There was much tension in the homes of the women interviewed and it is impossible that the children in these families were able to escape this even if they were not direct victims. The women with children who left the abusive situation reported improved behavior in their children following adjustment to the change. Such symptoms as bed wetting, tantrums, extreme mood changes and in several cases, abusive behavior towards the mothers, ceased or became less frequent.

c. Sometimes willing to assist but unreliable or showed poor judgement. The women that reported this, six, were consistent in reporting erratic

enforcement of rules or changes of the rules that the children were to follow. The men appeared to be much more willing to take care of the children when it involved "fun" kinds of activities. In one case these fun activities were planned with the children, deliberately leaving the mother out. Thus in this case, the discipline and daily type of child care was hers, while the outings were his.

An example of the sometimes impractical efforts to interact with the childre is "L's" husband buying a six foot bobsled for his petite wife to struggle with and their three small children to ride. Some of these men appeared to be immature in their attempts at child care, leaving the children unattended while they slept and being negligent regarding safety precautions. This type of behavior resulted in one child drinking a bottle of strong cough medicine so both father and child were in a deep sleep when the mother returned home. The men seemed to use little common sense in the activities that they planned for the children. It was as if they were all children together, gorging, buying and running until the children were exhausted and often overwrought.

18. Loss of Interest in Woman Immediately or Soon After Marriage - Two types of this abuse are dealt with.

a. Sexual. In four of these men the loss of sexual interest immediately after marriage was dramatic. These men appeared to have a strong sex drive before marriage and in some cases the day after the wedding the interest appeared to have changed radically. One man didn't wait thatlong but left his wife on their wedding night and joined a male friend in a bar. Another woman relates that her husband, before

marriage, did not seem particularly interested in other women but as soon as the ceremony had ended he was pursuing every female in sight and paying no attention to her. Even on their European honeymoon he would take her on a sight-seeing trip and pick up another woman on the bus, leaving his wife to get back to the hotel and entertain herself as best she could.

b. As a person and/or companion. This change was extremely prevalent, being listed as a manifestation of abuse in nineteen of the women. The striking feature of this abuse is that these same men were attentive, at least somewhat talkative and charming to the women before marriage but after marriage the change was striking and immediate. The women stated that they would never have married the men if they had displayed this same characteristic before marriage.

The lack of interest in the woman as a companion includes not only the social life of the couple but their interaction as a couple and as individuals within the marriage. There was an immediate lack of interest, in the woman's opinion, in discussing mutual interests and in treating her as a worthwhile or interesting person. It was usual for these husbands to refuse to take their wives out socially but the abuse was more deep-seated than that. One woman stated that she was his possession, "like the car, his gun, his dog". The women who talked of this form of abuse believed that they were valued only according to their ability to keep the house exceedingly clean and neat, to entertain business associates and, in general, to furnish background for the man. "D's" husband has offered to pay her for the tasks that he wants her to do. An example of this is his desire to have her stay

longer in their vacation home while he hunted. The couple would not have been together but he would have known that she was there waiting and ready to wash his clothes when he returned. He was unable to understand why offering to pay her for this was not acceptable, but was insulting to her.

19. Financial - Two areas of this abuse are described.

a. Misuse of own income. Eighteen of the men discussed misused their money, but the pattern of misuse varied. For the drinkers in the group, a great deal of money was spent buying drinks not only for themselves but for casual friends at the bars. Most of these men, including the non-drinkers, were extravagant in their purchases of personal items such as vehicles, guns and stereos. Four of them had dreams of striking it rich in business schemes but did little or nothing to realize those dreams. One man spent substantial sums of money for industrial patterns but even though he was encouraged to manufacture and market the items, did not do so. Several of the men quit their jobs frequently and usually the new job was not a step up.

An example of one money making scheme which was attempted was the raising of pigs in a garage in a restricted area. No large amount could have been realized by the scheme and the risk of being found out was great. The end result, because of purchased feed and the death of several of the pigs, was a substantial loss for the family.

"Y's" husband, within the three years of their marriage, purchased three motorcycles, five automobiles, a pick-up truck and half interest in a boat. He was not a wealthy man, his wife worked and attempted to keep bills paid and he continually minimized the importance of her job.

Not all of the men reported as misuing overspent. Some of the men saved every cent they made and lived off their wife's salary in order to acquire real estate and stocks. This saved income was considered the man's property and in these cases the woman was permitted little or no decision as to either the investment or the use of it. "A's" husband worked two jobs to pay the family's living expenses. When she needed money she was forced to ask her husband for it. She never knew how much he would give her, as the amount depended on the mood he was in. She stated that it was very humiliating for her to have to request money. Her husband was not a poor man for he made over $30,000 in his job.

b. Refusal to pay wife's "share". Nine of the men refused to pay what was considered to be the wife's half of the expenses. Most of the women who worked had gotten into the habit of paying certain family expenses. This distribution of expenses had not been worked out in a systematic way, but had evolved without much discussion. Some of the women paid all of the daily expenses. In the majority of these cases the wives were expected to give a strict accounting of how the money was used. Several of the husbands attempted to check to make sure the woman was not hiding any money away.

20. Erratic Behavior - Five areas of this type of abuse are illustrated.

a. Illogical reactions to situations. Twenty of the women stated that their husband or lovers had illogical reactions to situations. Some of the illogical reactions included breaking household goods because the woman was a few minutes later in arriving home than was expected. Another illogical reaction was one man's shutting himself in

his room for hours or even days at a time during periods of anger or worry. The telephone, as an instrument did not contribute to the problems of the men, but was often pulled from the wall. What a telephone represented is not clear from the behavior leading up to the incident.

"N's" husband would invite her to dinner, then lock her in the car and drive her around for hours, harassing her about her faults. Occasionally the dinner invitation would be genuine so the situation was always filled with tension and foreboding. "H's" husband would invite her out for the evening and would criticize each outfit she would put on, telling her that it was unsuitable or didn't look nice on her and commanding her to change until it was too late to go out. She was to blame for ruining their evening he then told her.

A number of these men needed their wives as an audience. The man who expected his wife to watch him milk cows after she had been on her feet all day at work was an extreme example but several of the men expected that their wives watch them play different games of ball or even officiate. These games were not occasional ones, but consumed almost all of the men's time outside of their job hours.

b. Lack of clarity in behavior leading up to crisis incidents. Twenty of the women stated that they did not know what brought on the man's anger. Some of the women could see a build-up period for tension and anger but there was no logical, forseeable pattern of reason to this and the women seemed unable to do more than postpone or change the setting of the abuse. Often they were not able to do even this. Other women stated that the frightening or bizarre behavior did not appear to

be caused by anything, it simply appeared.

c. Great overreaction to incidents. Twenty women reported this type of abuse. One of the men attacked his wife and sister-in-law verbally and then proceeded to get out his guns and line them up as if he intended to use them. The precipitating factor was a date the sister-in-law had. The situation had already been discussed in the family and although the man did not like the prospective date, he had agreed to it. The sister-in-law was visiting the couple briefly and there was no romantic attachment between the two persons. On another occasion the sister-in-law was told to get away from the man's wife, that the wife was his property. This same women enabled her sister and baby to escape and return home to their family, so perhpas she was perceived as a threat to the man's power.

One of the husbands verbally attacked his wife and then pushed her down because while carrying furniture into their home she had stepped in dog waste and tracked it into the house. Another man pulled the wiring from his wife's car to prevent her going to her high school reunion although he had been invited to attend with her, had refused but had reluctantly said that she could go.

"S's" husband threatened to kill a neighbor woman who had befriended her and "K's" husband quite his job and blamed her for his unemployment when she protested his affair with a woman at his place of work.

d. Extreme mood changes. This was an area of abuse for seventeen of the women in the study. They were not able to predict when the mood change would occur and how severe the issuing events would be. There

was a sense of waiting for an explosion. There was a desire to protect oneself and to prepare for the event but the inability to do so. There was not enough available information as to what would occur and when it would occur. This contributed to a fear and tension situation that was present almost constantly for these women.

e. Contradictory statements. Contradictory statements contributed to the confusion and unreal life patterns of sixteen of the women. Statements as to what he wanted, enjoyed, and believed were changed with frequency by the man and further led to the woman feeling unable to please or to satisfy. These contradictory statements also carried over into the males' perception past events and led to confusion as to who had wanted what or who had done what in the past. Another area that seems best dealt with here is the dreams or plans that the man had for the future. These dreams and plans did not match with his practices, leading to confusion as to true feelings and motives. One example is "D's" husband who often talked about wanting to fish, lived near a lake and never attempted to fish.

"N's" husband talks of having to work two jobs to make ends meet because of her spending sprees, but he is the one who over-spends the budget by stocking large amounts of sale items and bargains and making other unnecessary purchases. "J's" husband is an ardent spokesperson for family life, but in fact takes no responsibility for his children. "L's" husband reminds her that he hasn't long to live when he has difficulty getting her to agree to his plans. She discussed the situation with his doctor and was told that her husband's health is excellent.

21. Suicide Threats - Three areas of this abuse are categorized.

a. By gun. Guns were the method of choice for the men of this study. For the six men who threatened suicide by gun it is necessary to take the threat seriously for all of the men had the weapons available to carry out the plan. In fact, the men who threatened to use a gun had not one but several guns available and kept them cleaned and ready for action. Some of the men who threatened suicide by gun also threatened it by other means.

b. By automobile. This was a particularly lethal suicide threat for it was often made when the family was in the car with the man and it was perceived as perhaps being carried out as a group action. The men were frequently described as "driving like a madman" and driving "like he was crazy" so even when there was no direct suicide threat at that moment, it was considered a possible course of action by those involved with these three men.

c. Other means. Most of the suicide threats of the six men in this category were vague as to method. One man threw his dentures at his wife and told her she would need them to identify his body. Others would state that "this is goodbye" and run out the door. Some implied or stated that they would use an overdose of medicine or pills. One man called his lover in the middle of the night to say that he was leaving her everything he owned as he would have no further use for them. He had no belongings but she believed that he was goint to take his life and rushed out to find him. When she did, he was sitting in a bar with friends behaving as if nothing umusual had occurred.

22. Emotional Attitude of Victim - As reported by the women who volunteered for the interviews.

a. At times of abuse. Many of the women cried when they related their feelings during the period of abuse. The words used most often to describe their feelings were: humiliated, hurt, frightened, dominated, depressed, confused, disappointed, inadequate, harassed and hopeless. The numbers reporting each experience are listed at the end of this article. Eight of the women suffered physical symptoms that gave them either severe stomach and bowel problems, nervous anxiety attacks or the headaches and vision problems associated with brain tumors. The women who suffered from feelings of unreality, while not as many in number, seemed to have had extreme pain and discomfort in that it gave them a feeling of non-existence.

b. At the time of the interview. Seven of the women were still in the abusive situation at the time of the interview so the results are varied by this. Basically, the women who are out of the abusive situation report that their lives have changed for the better. The improvement in most cases depends on the length of time that they have been out of the battering situation. Two of the women who are still in the situation stated that they did not care about living. One fears that she might attempt suicide. These seven women have made a decision to stay in the situation for reasons that seem important to them at this time but the impression received during the interview was that three of them would not be able to withstand the strain much longer and would probably end the relationship.

The women who have ended the battering situation report that they are more self-protective, avoid men, believe that they deserved better

than they have received in life, that they are more confident and like themselves better, that they are healthier and that they have more peace. The changes that they describe are relative as they are comparing the present time with the abusive one. Numbers of women reporting each outcome are listed at the end of the article, in Appendix A.

Coding Form
(Designed by Pat Hoffman)

1. Silent Treatment
   a. Refusal to discuss 22
   b. Refusal to talk at all 14
2. Sexual
   a. Accusations of promiscuity 13
   b. Lack of sexual activity with interviewee 9
   c. Disparaging regarding her ability or attractiveness 9
   d. Little or no tenderness 15
3. Denial
   a. Denial of her perceptions 19
   b. Denial of happenings 10
4. Overt anger behavior
   a. Tantrums, slamming doors, yelling 18
   b. Verbal threats 11
   c. Very irritable 19
   d. Damaging housewares 10
   e. Damaging interviewee's personal belongings 11
   f. Hitting, kicking, using force to influence behavior 12
5. Slave-master or person-thing relationship
   a. Issuing orders 15
   b. Disregard for desires or feelings 23
   c. Refusal to use person's name 1
   d. Made major life decisions without consulting with the woman 12
6. Possessiveness
   a. Jealousy (extreme) 9
   b. Refusal to have children or to share person with children reluctantly 3
   c. Reluctance or refusal to take her out with friends 10
   d. Reluctance to permit her interaction with her friends 15
   e. Demanding return from social gathering where she has gone without him 1
7. Disparaging treatment in front of acquaintances
   a. Verbal 19
   b. Physical 10
8. Unreliability regarding commitments
   a. Broke them 13
   b. Stretched time limits to extremes 10
9. Refusal to take responsibility for upkeep of home, yard and household repairs
   a. Took none 14
   b. Took little 8
   c. Completely ignored it 7
10. Refusal to accept responsibility for marriage relationship
   a. Refusal to seek professional help for problems 14
   b. Refusal to acknowledge any responsibility for problems 18
   c. Refusal to give time line for return from outing or work 8
11. Vile language directed toward the woman
   a. Language directed to her in private 15
   b. Language directed to her in front of others 12
12. Sleep deprivation
   a. Due to worry and concern 21
   b. Due to interuptions by partner 6
   c. Due to scenes 11

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Coding Form (page 2)

13. Isolation
    a. Moved far away from her support system 19
    b. Physical without phone and/or automobile 7
    c. Some distance away from neighbors 2
14. Negative attitude toward women
    a. Expressed hatred or disgust with women 5
    b. Expressed hatred or disgust with mother 8
15. Misuse of recreational activity to point of addiction
    a. TV 2
    b. Drinking 15
    c. Drugs 3
    d. Other 12
16. Frequent and severe criticism of woman
    a. Of strong points or points of at least moderate strength 18
    b. Criticism of weaknesses or general criticism 10
    c. Criticism of intelligence 12
    d. Criticism of physical appearance 12
    e. Criticism of sexual attractiveness 6
17. Ability to assist with children (18 of the 25 have children)
    a. Non-acceptance of duties 10
    b. Mistreatment 6
    c. Sometimes willing to assist but unrealiable or showed poor judgment 6
18. Loss of interest immediately or soon after marriage in woman
    a. Sexual 4
    b. As a person and/or companion 19
19. Financial
    a. Misuse of own income 18
    b. Refusal to pay wife's "share" 9
20. Erratic behavior
    a. Illogical reactions to situations 20
    b. Lack of clarity in behavior leading up to crisis incidents 20
    c. Great overreaction to incidents 20
    d. Extreme mood changes 17
    e. Contradictory statements 16
21. Suicide threats
    a. By gun 6
    b. By automobile 3
    c. Other means 6
22. Emotional attitude of victim (self-report)
    a. At time of abuse
    b. At present time

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APPENDIX A

Emotional State at Time of Interview (primary states)		Number
1.	Healthier	11
2.	More self-protective	11
3.	Distrustful	11
4.	Feels she deserves better	9
5.	More confident	10
6.	More peaceful	10
7.	Likes self	8
8.	Afraid of relationship	8
9.	Hurt	7
10.	Angry	7
11.	Insecure	5
12.	Avoids men	4
13.	Better support system, feels love	6
14.	More secure	5
15.	More satisfied and satisfying parent	4
16.	Hates men	4
17.	Doesn't yet know own feelings	3
18.	Happy	2
19.	Drained	2
20.	Doesn't want to live	2
21.	Worries constantly	1

APPENDIX A (continued)

Emotional State During Situation (Primary Emotional States)		Number Reporting
1.	Hurt	14
2.	Frightened	14
3.	Humiliated	13
4.	Angry	10
5.	Harassed	10
6.	Nervous, anxiety attacks, physical symptoms	12
7.	Dominated	9
8.	Confused	9
9.	Disappointed	9
10.	Inadequate	8
11.	Manipulated	7
12.	Depressed	7
13.	Rejected	6
14.	Embarrassed	6
15.	Resentful	6
16.	Turned to drugs or alcohol due to desperation	6
17.	Ashamed	5
18.	Trapped	7
19.	Isolated	5
20.	Non-person	5
21.	Constantly worried	5
22.	Insane	3
23.	Insecure	3
24.	Unsure of reality	3
25.	Didn't want to live	5
26.	Intimidated, helpless, hopeless	9
27.	Doubted her ability and judgment	4
28.	Disgusted	5
29.	Frustrated	5
30.	Hatred	2

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